

Statement and Interview with Mr. I. E. Nitschke in the office of Mr. Jim Garrison, District Attorney on Tuesday, January 17, 1967 at approximately 1:00 p.m.

My name is I. E. Nitschke. I live at 559 Focis in Metairie. My unlisted telephone number is 831-1648. My office phone at Michoud is 255-2711.

During the latter part of 1961 I was contacted by William Guy Bannister, then in the private investigative business in the City of New Orleans, Louisiana. At this time Bannister invited me to participate in a bid for the security contract at the forthcoming reactivation of the Michoud assembly facility in New Orleans, Louisiana. Bannister's interest was in submitting a bid for the security as a part of the Housekeeping Program at this facility.

I arrived in New Orleans about mid-November, 1961. Subsequently, Bannister and I submitted a bid through several prime contractors for the security contract at Michoud. In the interim, while we were awaiting the awarding of the Housekeeping or support services contract, I maintained a desk in Mr. Bannister's office, then situated at 531 Lafayette in New Orleans.

I recall on one occasion, possibly the early part of December, 1961, when I returned to Bannister's office there were several male persons then engaged in a conference with Bannister. Subsequently, I was invited into his office and was introduced to four or possibly five males, all of whom from appearance appeared to be of Latin extraction. I was later advised that these men were Cubans that had sought refuge in the United States. After I was introduced to these men it was explained to those present that I had been considered a firearms expert in my many years with the Federal Bureau of Investigation; that I had an excellent understanding of nomenclature and the mechanics, etc. of various types of firearms. The conversation after the introduction developed quickly into the fact that the persons in Bannister's office were interested in obtaining firearms of many varieties, mainly shoulder weapons, machine guns or semi-automatic weapons. They were interested in suppliers of this type of weapon. I recall having stated that Klein's of Chicago, Illinois, a wholesale firearms house, would be one source; that a firm in Hollywood, California, the name of which I do not recall at the moment, were importers of many foreign types of weapons, primarily shoulder weapons and this might possibly be a source.

The taller of the men that were in Bannister's office had a full head of black hair. He appeared to be between 6' and possibly 6'2" tall. His lips were full or thick. He appeared to be the leader in the conversation. There was a short, stocky man that

Statement and interview with I. E. Nitschke.

I estimated to weigh from 210 to possibly 230 pounds with obviously large arms and neck. The others were lighter in complexion and all definitely appeared to be Latins.

I have been shown a photograph in which the subjects are numbered from 1 to 7 and bears Exhibit A, my name and the date 1/17/67. The subject identified with the numeral 3 appears extremely similar if not identical to the person I have referred to here as the shorter and heavier built of the Latins in Bannister's office. The photograph bearing Nitschke-C with the date 1/17/67 is a generally good likeness of one of the men in Bannister's office. I recall that he had a more or less hairline mustache, black hair and was perhaps as light or lighter in skin coloring than any of the others in the office. He did not appear to inject himself in the conversation but sparsely and that for the most part was in Spanish between himself and the others in Bannister's office. The conversation for the most part was directed to an individual hereinafter described as D-3 in photograph Nitschke-D dated 1/17/67. The man in photo Nitschke-D appears to have a very striking resemblance to the tall man that I have previously described.

Not too long after I had entered Bannister's office, the subject D-3 took a tablet on Bannister's desk and with a pen drew a rough sketch of a silencer adaptable to a rifle. At this point subject D-3 asked me specifically if I knew where silencers could be acquired that might be attached to rifles and/or machine guns. My reply to this query was in the negative. He then completed the sketch that he had started and asked if the writer had any knowledge of where silencers could be made. To this query I replied that they could perhaps be made by any welder or machinist that was capable of doing precision work; that I knew of no such person. The gist of the conversation in Bannister's office on this occasion was primarily concerned with the acquisition of, as I gathered, a reasonable quantity of weapons. The purpose for these weapons was not mentioned during my presence. Whether it was later discussed, I am not aware of.

After the departure of this group, which was late in the afternoon as I recall, I was told by Bannister that the subject D-3 was exceptionally adept in guerilla warfare and guerilla-type tactics.

NOTE: Here Mr. Garrison and Mr. Nitschke discussed the difference in appearance of subject D-3 from the rest of the group, remarking that it was rather unusual for a guerilla fighter to be so well dressed and well groomed.

Statement and interview with I. E. Nitschke.

I have been shown a photograph identified as Nitschke-B with the date 1/17/67 thereupon and this is a photograph bearing New Orleans Police Department #107062. This man I met on one occasion in Bannister's office. Again, this was very late in the afternoon. I would say approximately 5:00 p.m. I was attracted to the physical appearance of this man by what appeared to be false hair and/or false eyelashes and his face appeared as though he had some type of make-up thereupon. The coat that he is wearing in the photograph even appears similar to the one that he was wearing when I recall having met him. This man was accompanied by a smaller person in stature and apparently younger in years and the gist of his conversation with Bannister when I was introduced was to the effect that he had just returned from a trip to South America. I am not certain of the country that he had visited. The person with him at this time spoke one or two words of Spanish. The person identified in this photograph appeared to speak Spanish, in the words that he used, seemingly fluently. I do not know the purpose of the visit of this individual to Bannister's office but he did have some conversation with Bannister personally following my introduction to him. I suppose that he was possibly in the office at best about one-half hour. I have been advised that this man's name is David W. Ferrie.

GARRISON:

The man that you described as D-3 in Nitschke-D who is standing with the group with Lee Oswald -- is there anything else before we depart from the pictures that you can recall? He is extremely interesting from the conversation which you described and from Bannister's description of him. Did he wear, for example, jewelry of any sort?

NITSCHKE:

No, I don't even recall a ring. I will say this, he was neat and well-groomed in a dark suit and dark tie.

GARRISON:

Did he speak English?

NITSCHKE:

Yes. Reasonably well, too, by the way.

GARRISON:

Do you recall if he had a nickname?

Statement and interview with I. E. Nitschke.

NITSCHKE:

No.

GARRISON:

Let me ask about the circumstances of the meeting with these men.
Was this in the inner office?

NITSCHKE:

It was in Bannister's own private office.

GARRISON:

Did he shut the door?

NITSCHKE:

Definitely. The door was definitely closed. There was only one door and it was definitely closed.

GARRISON:

Are any of these names of Cuban individuals familiar?
Rogelio Cisceros Diaz? Also known as Eugenio.

NITSCHKE:

No.

GARRISON:

How about the nickname Toro?

NITSCHKE:

No.

GARRISON:

Manual Gonzalez?

NITSCHKE:

Gonzalez. Yes.

Statement and interview with I. E. Nitschke.

GARRISON:

Does that name come back at all looking at Nitschke-A?

NITSCHKE:

Mr. Gonzalez could be possibly this "3" subject in Nitschke-A photograph here. I don't want to be positive.

GARRISON:

But that is your impression?

NITSCHKE:

Yes.

GARRISON:

How about the nickname Toro?

NITSCHKE:

No, I don't associate it. I don't know how many times Bannister had met these men previously but some of them had definitely met with him before that date.

GARRISON:

There was a relationship?

NITSCHKE:

Yes. He had met some, if not all of them previously.

GARRISON:

He knew them by name?

NITSCHKE:

Yes. He introduced me, but meeting them only one time the names did not register.

GARRISON:

How about the name Juan Johnny Martin?

Statement and interview with I. E. Nitschke.

NITSCHKE:

No. The name Martin is rather common.

IVON:

How about Layton Martens? (showing photograph)

NITSCHKE:

This boy, I am wondering if he was with Ferrie that afternoon.

GARRISON:

He was about 17 years old at that time.

NITSCHKE:

The boy with him wasn't too old. That looks like the boy with Ferrie. I gathered that the fellow with Ferrie had physically been with Ferrie from wherever he came from in South America. That young man looks like he could have been the man.

GARRISON:

Is this boy generally about the age and type?

NITSCHKE:

His haircut was short but whether it was a butch cut or not I do not know. This might have been the boy that was with him but I don't want to say. Nitschke-E, New Orleans Police Department photograph #105377 might possibly have been the person accompanying Ferrie on the occasion when I was in Bannister's office.

IVON:

Amelio Santana? (showing photograph)

NITSCHKE:

No. He doesn't look familiar to me.

Statement and interview with I. E. Nitschke.

IVON:

Melvin Seeling? (showing photograph)

NITSCHKE:

No. Not by name. He doesn't look at all familiar. No. The fellows that were in there, their hair was reasonably well-groomed. It wasn't shaggy.

IVON:

Miguel Torres? (showing photograph)

NITSCHKE:

He could have well been one of them. This fellow bears some physical resemblance to one of the men. I am thinking about his hair. None of them were too old. (Reference here made to photograph Nitschke-F.)

GARRISON:

Didn't it seem rather odd to you after having known Guy Bannister so long and considering his background that he would be surrounded by these particular Cubans that you have described?

NITSCHKE:

To be frank with you, it did. They certainly were the type of people that I would not care to be associated with.

GARRISON:

Of those individuals you described, was there one who seemed head of all the others, as their leader, in conversation?

NITSCHKE:

Very positively. The one that I have identified here as D-3. Very definitely the leader of the conversation. The polished looking fellow. When he spoke the others listened. When he had the floor, they didn't interrupt him.

Statement and Interview with I. E. Nitschke.

GARRISON:

Did Guy indicate in any way the Latin country with regard to D-3 and his guerilla tactics?

NITSCHKE:

He mentioned Cuba very definitely. In fact, Guy said, can you imagine meeting that fellow out in a dark alley somewhere. He was a wiry, dark fellow.

IVON:

Morris Brownlee?

NITSCHKE:

Not by name, no. Definitely not.

IVON:

(Showing picture) I do not have this man's name.

NITSCHKE:

No. I think there was only one or two that had a mustache and they were not this heavy. More like hairline.

IVON:

Miguel Mariana Cruz. (showing photograph)

NITSCHKE:

Association starts to bring back some reflection. There was one of these fellows as I recall that had some pimples on his face but I don't believe it was this young man here.

IVON:

Alvin Beaubouef. (no photograph)

NITSCHKE:

No. Name doesn't register.

The gist of the whole thing was the acquisition of weapons and silencers. While I was in their presence that was their sole reason for being there and what was ahead of it or behind it,

Statement and interview with I. E. Nitschke.

I don't know. Somewhere in that conversation, and this may not be a direct quote, money did not seem to be any object - for whatever that's worth.

I might interject that after the incident I have described, Bannister advised me that it was his understanding that there would be training areas physically located in various sections of the United States and as I recall he principally mentioned the South, where exiles and people sympathetic to the Cuban program would be trained in guerilla warfare and guerilla tactics. He mentioned that the individual that I have tentatively identified in photograph Nitschke-D as D-3 was the person that would lead the training of these people.

ADDENDUM:

Since dictating the above I have been shown photograph Nitschke-G dated 1/17/67. This is a police photograph of Alvin R. Beaubouef. There is a very striking resemblance between this photograph and the man that I observed in Bannister's office with Ferrie, described in photograph Nitschke-B. I got the impression from the small amount of conversation that I overheard that both Ferrie and Beaubouef had within a matter of hours returned from some unknown country in South America. I am positive of the fact that they had been to some South American country, the name of which I am not positive.

I. E. Nitschke

Date _____